

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9531

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 8581

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IN

SUBJECT: MRS. GANDHI ADDRESSES NATION, CIVIL SERVANTS

SUMMARY: IN A BROADCAST TO THE NATION AND IN A SEPARATE MEETING WITH CIVIL SERVANTS JUNE 27, MRS. GANDHI EMPHASIZED THE THREAT TO DEMOCRACY WHICH HAD BEEN POSED BY EXTREMIST GROUPS AND BY OPPOSITION STRIKES, ETC., SCHEDULED TO BEGIN JUNE 29, WHICH "WOULD HAVE POSED A GRAVE THREAT TO PUBLIC ORDER AND DAMAGE TO ECONOMY BEYOND REPAIR." THE EMERGENCY HAD BEEN PROCLAIMED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION. SHE HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO LIFT IT "SOON"; THAT IT WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION. SHE CRITICIZED "IRRESPONSIBLE WRITING" BY THE PRESS. ECONOMIC MEASURES PROMISED EARLIER WOULD "TAKE A COUPLE OF DAYS MORE" BUT IN ANY CASE THERE WERE NO PLANS FOR NATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES OR DRASTIC

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NEW CONTROLS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE THREAT FROM THE OPPOSITION: IN HER RADIO ADDRESS, MRS. GANDHI NOTED THE "CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE" CREATED OVER THE PAST MONTHS AND THE OPPOSITION "PROGRAM OF COUNTRYWIDE BANDHS (STRIKES), GHERAOS, AGITATIONS, DISRUPTION AND INCITEMENT TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, POLICE AND DEFENCE FORCES IN AN ATTEMPT TO PARALYZE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO BEGIN JUNE 29. "WE HAD NO DOUBT THAT SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN GRAVE THREAT TO PUBLIC ORDER AND DAMAGE TO ECONOMY BEYOND REPAIR. THIS HAD TO BE PREVENTED." IN HER ADDRESS TO CIVIL SERVANTS, MUCH OF THE REPORTING OF WHICH APPEARS BASED ON A PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU HANDOUT, MRS. GANDHI REPORTEDLY SAID THAT SHE SENSED THE GREATEST PERIL TO DEMOCRACY FROM EXTREMISTS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT. J.P. NARAYAN HAD GIVEN RESPECTABILITY TO ALL KINDS OF FORCES -- INCLUDING THE RSS (MILITANT HINDU ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE JANA SANGH), THE NAXALITES AND THE MARXIST COMMUNISTS. SHE SUSPECTED THAT THIS MOVEMENT RECEIVED ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. FORCES AT WORK FOR DESTRUCTION OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY -- HERE SHE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY THE RSS -- FUNCTIONED THROUGH SMALL GROUPS WHICH INFILTRATED VARIOUS SECTIONS OF NATIONAL LIFE, CREATING MISUNDERSTANDING AND CONFUSION. ATTEMPTS WERE BEING MADE TO INFILTRATE THE DEFENCE SERVICES AND POLICE, AND THERE HAD BEEN AN OPEN CALL TO THE ARMY AND POLICE NOT TO OBEY ORDERS WHICH THEY CONSIDERED WRONG.

2. DEMOCRACY AND LIFTING OF THE EMERGENCY: MRS. GANDHI TOLD THE CIVIL SERVANTS THAT THE EMERGENCY HAD BEEN PROCLAIMED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION AND HAD CONSTITUTIONAL SANCTION. SHE FIRMLY BELIEVED IN DEMOCRACY. THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION DID NOT MEAN THAT THE MINORITY SHOULD BAND ITSELF TOGETHER TO BRING AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT DOWN BY THE USE OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY METHODS. OR, AS SHE PUT IT IN HER RADIO ADDRESS, "EVEN IN A DEMOCRACY THERE ARE LIMITS WHICH CANNOT BE CROSSED; VIOLENT ACTION AND SENSELESS SATYAGRAHAS WILL PULL DOWN THE WHOLE EDIFICE, WHICH HAS BEEN BUILT OVER THE YEARS." THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY WAS NOT TO SUPPRESS DEMOCRACY BUT TO SAVE IT. "I TRUST IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO LIFT THE EMERGENCY SOON," SHE SAID IN HER RADIO ADDRESS. SHE REPORTEDLY TOLD THE CIVIL SERVANTS THAT

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SHE HOPED THE EMERGENCY WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION.

3. THE PRESS: "IN SITUATIONS OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCE, WHETHER LANGUAGE OR COMMUNAL RIOTS, GRAVE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE BY IRRESPONSIBLE WRITING. WE HAD TO PREVENT SUCH A SITUATION. FOR SOME TIME SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE DELIBERATELY DISTORTED NEWS AND MADE MALICIOUS AND PROVOCATIVE COMMENTS." TENDENTIOUS AND ONE-SIDED NEWS AND COMMENTS WERE BEING

PUBLISHED. LETTERS SEEKING TO CORRECT FALSE ALLEGATIONS OR PUTTING FORWARD THE OPPOSITE POINT OF VIEW WERE SELDOM GIVEN PUBLICITY. THE PURPOSE OF CENSORSHIP WAS TO RESTORE A CLIMATE OF TRUST.

4. ECONOMIC MEASURES: MRS. GANDHI NOTED IN HER RADIO ADDRESS THAT SHE HAD PROMISED JUNE 26 THAT SHE WOULD SOON ANNOUNCE SOME ECONOMIC MEASURES. THESE WOULD "TAKE A COUPLE OF DAYS MORE." LATER SHE SAID "....WILD CONJECTURES ARE CIRCULATING ABOUT IMPENDING NATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES, ETC. AND DRASTIC NEW CONTROLS. WE HAVE NO SUCH PLANS. OUR PURPOSE IS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION ONE OF THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS IS TO SUPPLY POWER TO AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY. WE MUST ALLEVIATE THE HARDSHIPS OF THE POORER SECTIONS AND MIDDLE CLASSES."

5. INSTRUCTIONS TO CIVIL SERVANTS: MRS. GANDHI STRESSED THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE IN OFFICES. SECRETARIES SHOULD COME TO WORK PUNCTUALLY AND ENFORCE PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE BY OTHERS. THEY SHOULD ATTEND TO CLEANLINESS IN THEIR MINISTRIES. MINISTRIES SHOULD NOT LIVE IN A CLOSED WORLD AND SHUT OUT ADVICE FROM OUTSIDERS. ONCE A MINISTER HAD TAKEN A DECISION, IT WAS THE DUTY OF CIVIL SERVANTS TO CARRY IT OUT -- THERE SHOULD BE NO BACKSLIDING OR ATTEMPTS TO DEFEAT MINISTERIAL DECISIONS BY SLOWING DOWN ON IMPLEMENTATION. DISCIPLINE SHOULD NOT BE IN DEED ALONE BUT ALSO IN WORD. SHE HAD HEARD REPORTS THAT SOME CIVIL SERVANTS TENDED TO INDULGE IN LOOSE TALK EITHER IN THEIR OWN CONCLAVES OR AT EMBASSY RECEPTIONS. THIS WAS A REPREHENSIBLE HABIT WHICH HAD TO BE PUT DOWN.
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